



**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
MARINE HEAVY HELICOPTER SQUADRON 464  
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 29, 2D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING  
U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, PSC BOX 21023  
JACKSONVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 28545-1023

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1754  
FRO  
10 Mar 2010

From: Commanding Officer, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464  
To: Families of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464  
Subj: WELCOME TO THE CONDORS

Welcome aboard! You are about to embark on what I hope will be a very memorable and rewarding experience with one of the most capable and sought after helicopter squadrons in the Marine Corps. Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464 (HMH-464) has a battle tested reputation for providing premier heavy lift assault support world-wide and for being a close-knit family. We pursue professional excellence in every endeavor, strive to be the absolute best at mission execution and take great pride in supporting our brothers and sisters on the ground.

On March 1st, 1981, HMH-464 was activated as the first CH-53E Fleet Marine Force Squadron. Our mission is to support the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Commander by providing assault support transport of heavy equipment, combat troops, and supplies---day or night---under all weather conditions during expeditionary, joint, or combined operations. We do this by employing our weapon system, which is the mighty CH-53E Super Stallion. The CH-53E is arguably the most capable heavy lift helicopter in the free world. Its speed, range, and lift capacity are unmatched on the battlefield. For over 29 years the Condors have set the standard in places such as Beirut, Somalia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Liberia, South America, Haiti, Djibouti, Iraq, and Afghanistan. We are currently providing detachments for enduring deployments in support of the 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Our success on the battlefield doesn't come easily and is only attainable through the hard work and dedication of our highly trained Marines and Sailors. Due to the complexity of our mission, we often have to travel away from New River for schools and to conduct realistic training. Whether taking advantage of the outstanding ranges in California and Arizona, or attending schools hosted by Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron-1 (MAWTS-1) in Yuma, the tempo of operations remains high.

Maintaining this high of a tempo can be hard on families (and Marines). That's one reason my wife Lisa and I are so excited about the Marine Corps new Family Readiness Program. While there are still important roles for volunteers, the unit now has a full-time Family Readiness Officer (FRO): Heather Cayson. The other major change is the extension of the program to include a more liberal definition of "family." Rather than being limited to the spouse and children of the Marine, the new program seeks to include parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, significant others; in short, whomever the Marine wants to include. We will disseminate news and event information using the latest communication technology, again according to the Marine's (and the "family's") preferences.

Heather's focus as the FRO is to serve as an information conduit and facilitator. She has many years experience as a Marine spouse and volunteer, and has a wealth of insight into the resources available to Marine families. She is responsible for relaying important information from us (the Command) to our families and from our families to the Command. Both through her experiences and as a result of the extensive training she's participated in, she can help you navigate the maze of acronyms and programs available and gain access to the things you need. Most importantly, though, she understands the ups and downs our families face while their Marine is away from home - whether for a couple of weeks or several months. If she hasn't already contacted you, expect to hear from her soon. She can be reached at (910) 449-5204 or via email at [heather.cayson@usmc.mil](mailto:heather.cayson@usmc.mil). Additional information resources include the Squadron's website ([www.marines.mil/unit/2ndMAW/mag29/hmh464/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.marines.mil/unit/2ndMAW/mag29/hmh464/Pages/default.aspx)).

Again, I welcome you to the Condor team and appreciate the sacrifices you make in support of your Marine and our great country. Your unwavering support enhances our combat readiness and ensures our success on the battlefield.

Semper Fidelis,

LtCol Craig "Ahab" Rush